



1 PROVIDING RESPITE CARE

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BURLINGTON - 863-7370

1193 North Avenue
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MORRISVILLE - 888-4576

63 Professional Drive, Suite 3
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www.projectfamilyvt.org



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PROVIDING RESPITE CARE

Did You Know That...?

- About 1,200 children in Vermont — from infants to teens — currently live away from their families in foster care.
- You can have a major, positive impact on the lives of children in your community just by spending some quality time with them on a regular basis.
- Respite providers are invaluable; they allow foster parents and children to take much-needed breaks, which can often make the difference between a successful placement and one that ends in another move for a child.

About Foster Care

Sometimes children are abused or neglected and it is not safe for them to stay at home. When this happens, family courts transfer their custody to the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF).

Some children, but most often teens, come into DCF custody because they've either committed a delinquent act or they are without or beyond their parents' control.

In all of these situations, the state needs to find safe, nurturing places for the children to live while they can't be at home. This is called *foster care*. While it is not a magical cure-all, it is a time-proven way of helping children and families in need.

Most children who come into DCF custody return home to their parents.

About Providing Respite Care

Like all parents, foster parents also need a break — from family obligations or to attend to adult matters. That's where respite providers come in. They give foster parents and children time off so that they can do other things or just have time away from each other. Respite also provides children with opportunities to experience new things and to develop new relationships that can often last a lifetime.

Respite care is much like foster care, but for shorter periods of time. It can be for a few hours, a day, a weekend, or a week or two. Some people only provide respite for a specific child or foster family they know, while others offer respite to any child or family in their community.

Share your time, talents, and interests with children in your community. Become a respite provider!

Who Can Apply

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You can be single, married, living with a partner, or joined through a civil union.
- Applications are considered regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

Who We Are Looking For

The children in foster care are all different, each with their own unique needs, desires, and interests. That's why we need all types of people to care for them. The main skill you need to have is the ability to look after children safely.

If you can answer yes to the following questions, you are the type of person we are looking for.

- Do you enjoy being around children?
- Do you have a sense of humor?
- Can you treat children in foster care like your own?
- Can you stick by them even if they act out?
- Can you provide direction and structure in a nurturing way?
- Are you compassionate? Patient? Open-minded?
- Are you reliable, honest, and a good role model?
- Are you willing to ask for help when you need it?

“DOING RESPITE CARE IS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR A PERSON OR A FAMILY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN A CHILD'S LIFE, IF ONLY FOR A SHORT PERIOD. IT'S ALSO A GREAT WAY TO GET YOUR FEET WET, TO SEE IF PROVIDING FOSTER CARE IS REALLY FOR YOU. BUT BE WARNED: ONCE YOU START, IT'S HARD TO STOP. YOUR HEART WILL BE TOUCHED, AND YOU WILL BE CHANGED FOREVER.”



6 Steps To Providing Respite Care

You do not need to have a foster care license to provide respite care for a child in state custody; however, you do need to go through an application and assessment process.

Step 1. You complete an application package.

Step 2. A worker visits you in your home to discuss issues such as the type of children you'd like to provide respite for, your experience with children, your interests, the activities you enjoy, the issues that may arise when caring for children in custody, and how to access services in case of an emergency.

Step 3. If you will be providing respite care in your home, the worker tours your home to make sure it meets our licensing regulations.

Step 4. We conduct background checks on members of your household.

Step 5. The district office approves or denies your application.

Step 6. If approved, you are matched with a child or group of siblings.

The Support Available

Financial Support

You will be paid a standard nightly or hourly rate; however, that amount can be higher in certain special circumstances.

Training

While you are not required to attend the core training that all foster parents receive, you are welcome to participate. You can also take advantage of training opportunities offered throughout the year.

Crisis Support

An Emergency Services Program worker will be available by phone to help you in case of a crisis — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Peer Support

You will get opportunities to meet and network with other caregivers, including respite providers, foster parents, and adoptive parents.

What's In It For You

You get to:

- Help children and foster parents.
- Spend time with children and then send them back — much like grandparents, aunts, and uncles do.
- Help shape young lives.
- See the positive difference you've made in the lives of children.
- Experience an amazing feeling of satisfaction.
- Have fun!

About Project Family

In 2000, the Vermont Department for Children and Families joined with the Lund Family Center — our state's largest and oldest nonprofit adoption agency — to create Project Family.

We are dedicated to:

- Finding parents for Vermont children in need.
- Helping parents and children access the support and services they need.

We envision a society in which every child feels safe, cared for, and part of a loving family. One where foster care is understood, embraced, and supported by everyone.

For More Information

For more information about becoming a respite provider, or to begin the application process, please contact the DCF district office nearest to you (see the list on the back). Ask to speak to the Resource Coordinator.

FACT SHEETS ON FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION ARE ALSO AVAILABLE

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PROVIDING
RESPITE
CARE

2
PROVIDING
FOSTER
CARE

3
ADOPTING
A WAITING
CHILD